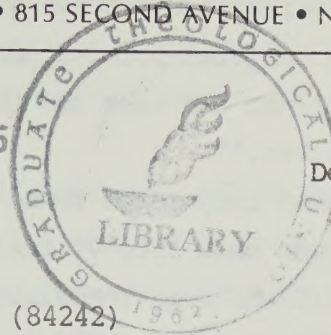


JAN 11 1985



Dec. 6, 1984

CONTENTS

PAGE

● Ethiopian Relief: More Needed, Faster (84242)	1
● England Takes Steps to Opening Ordination (84243)	3
● Coloradans Enact L-E-D Agreement (84244)	5
● Cuban Consultation Finds Signs of Hope (84245)	6
● Anglican Centre Broadens Base (84246)	8
● COCU Churches Get Study Document (84245)	9

ETHIOPIAN RELIEF:

MORE NEEDED, FASTER

DPS 84242

NEW YORK, (DPS, Dec.6) — After an intensive tour of Ethiopia, Canon Samir Habiby of the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief is convinced that the ravages of drought there can be overcome, but is equally convinced that faster and better efforts are needed.

Habiby, executive director of the Fund, went to Ethiopia in November as part of a four-nation tour to assess the famine relief needs throughout the horn of Africa and to assess also the responses of the many religious, governmental and secular organizations working to alleviate the disaster. For part of the trip, he traveled with Willis Logan, Africa desk officer of the National Council of Churches, and for other parts with members of the United States' diplomatic and AID missions. He also spoke with government and cadre leaders.

What he saw was the human suffering behind the statistics that fill newspapers and television screens now that the world has discovered Ethiopia.

-more-

DPS 84242/2

"The people are walking 30 and 40 miles to get to feeding centers and, of course, all I saw were the survivors. Often there would be only one parent and a child or two left from a family. A nurse who was weighing children pointed out one boy to me. He had lost his mother and his sister on the trek and the nurse said 'we're not sure his father will live either.'"

When they reach these centers, the European nurses and the Ethiopian women whom they've trained weigh the children, target the critically ill who need immediate attention and begin feeding them. "Most of those who get to the centers before they are too far gone will survive," Habiby said. "But that is far from being the answer."

Some 300,000 metric tons of food have been pledged, but that is less than a quarter of the need. Where is it going to come from? Only the United States has it. And if the food supply is quadrupled, that is still only part of the answer."

Habiby explained that early governmental and international response focused on feeding centers. Quickly, however, it was realized that this was a mistake. "The people come to the centers and can't leave — or at least don't want to because they would only go back to starve. So they sit there. There is not enough shelter and the sun beats down. Then at night it turns cold and they still come walking in."

Although the feeding centers are still a focal point, the effort has shifted somewhat to collecting the food in massive storage centers, and then distributing it as widely as possible, "and acquiring the pots and fuel to distribute with the food, so that people can cook it themselves."

This initial effort is going to take at least a year, Habiby said and pointed out that U.S. Christians could help the effort, not only by their contributions, "but by pressing our government to send much, much, more food and tents and medicine and pots. We will need to continue this effort — at all levels of advocacy — well beyond the time when this is no longer a media crisis."

At the same time, he emphasized, the long term work must be set in motion. Severe drought, and its consequences, is as ancient as Africa's history, yet, Africa is not a totally arid land. "In one of the

project areas we went to in the central highlands in Ethiopia, about 50 miles from Addis Ababa, there is beautiful rich land and plentiful water. I keep thinking of California where the modern technology allows the ample water of the north to be sent to the south which is now some of the richest farm land in America. Something along those lines is possible here."

Furthermore, Habiby feels confident that Africa can develop stable food supplies. "Uganda still has the potential to be a food exporter. Much of the work of the Fund has been dedicated to that in recent years and, although there are still grave problems there, I feel certain that country will rebound."

Habiby pointed to four areas in which the Episcopal Church -- particularly the Fund -- would concentrate its efforts.

The first will be through the Anglican diocese of Egypt of which Ethiopia is a part. St. Matthew's parish in Addis Ababa is host to many diplomatic and consular families in the country and already is deeply involved in relief and advocacy efforts. Habiby noted that these programs, as well as the parish's support of orphanages and other work carried out by Orthodox Christians would be a target.

St. Matthew and the diocese also work through the national Christian Relief Development Authority and these programs will also be eligible for Fund grants.

Church World Service, the relief arm of the National Council of Churches, is massively involved in providing food and immediate support and has already received Fund aid.

Finally, Africare, an internationally-active development agency presided over by Washington Bishop John T. Walker, is expected to be a prime vehicle for long range development work and is already in the country consulting with authorities on improving delivery systems.

"I am hopeful," Habiby said, "but still very concerned. We are reaching people, but we have to reach more of them faster. There is a real danger -- especially with the children. Even if they do survive, so many of them could be mentally impaired from malnutrition. That would be disastrous for the future of Africa. But there is hope. Africa is not a dying continent."

###

ENGLAND TAKES STEPS
TO OPENING ORDINATION

DPS 84243

LONDON (DPS, Dec. 6) — Following a five-hour debate, the General Synod of the Church of England has voted to introduce legislation to allow women to become priests. A motion moved by the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt. Rev. Ronald Bowlby, passed in all houses -- bishops 41-6; clergy 131-98; and laity 135-79.

The vote is the beginning of a complex legal and legislative process which will require Parliamentary approval. It may take until the 1990's before the first women are ordained priest.

The Archbishop of Canterbury told the house that he supported the ordination of women but felt that the time was not yet right for the Church of England to proceed and voted in opposition. The Archbishop of York also felt that the debate was being held prematurely but voted in favor.

The totals seemed to come as a surprise to both opponents of the issue and advocates, with the bishops approving it by 87 percent, the laity 63 percent and the clergy by 57 percent. That is a nearly 20 percent increase in both the Episcopal and clerical orders, although the clergy are still well short of the needed two-thirds for final approval.

Both factions -- led respectively by the Movement for the Ordination of Women and the Church Union -- have already begun planning to influence the choice of delegates to next year's synod, since a change in faces is more likely to produce the needed majorities than a change in position of current delegates.

In spite of the strong feelings, the debate was conducted with what the Church Times characterized as a "noticeably more irenic attitude than had prevailed in the past." This was typified by the main speakers. The motion was presented by Bowlby, whose own diocese had tabled the issue, and the main address against was delivered by Oswald Clark of Southwark who declared, "whatever the outcome of the debate, the bishop and I and our colleagues will be walking together and staying together as friends."

###

COLORADANS ENACT

L-E-D AGREEMENT

DPS 84244

DENVER (DPS, Dec. 6) -- Asserting that meaningful ecumenism needs to progress as rapidly as feasible through the "idea" stage and on into cooperative action, Lutherans and Episcopalians here are bringing the 25-year-old Lutheran Social Services of Colorado and its three-year-old parish-based counseling program into St. John's Episcopal Cathedral.

The ground work was laid more than a decade ago with the start of the national Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues, which culminated in 1982 with an 'interim agreement' among three Lutheran bodies, the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Episcopal Church. The agreement calls for sharing worship celebrations, but further, it calls for shared action in education and social service ministries.

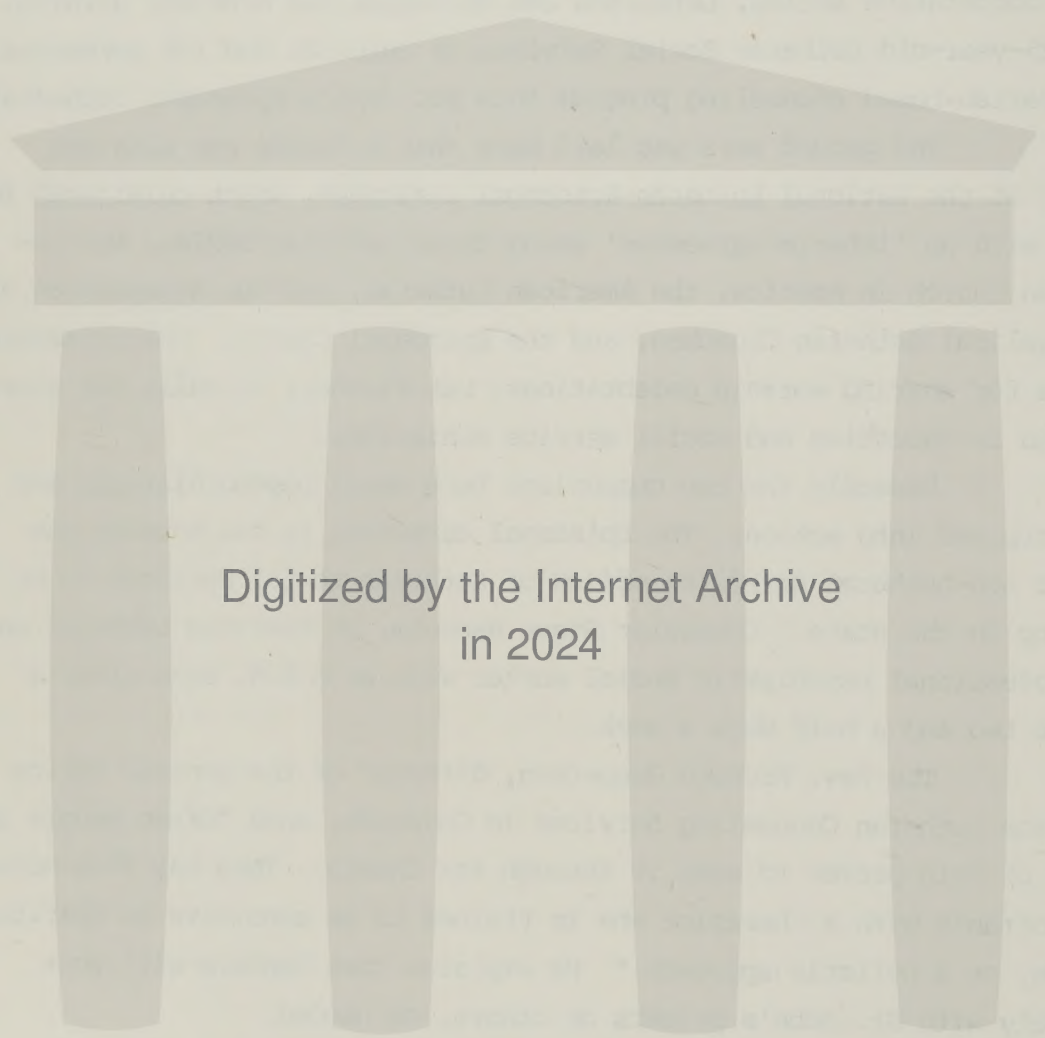
Recently the two communions here moved beyond dialogue and worship and into action: The Episcopal cathedral is now housing the first non-Lutheran satellite office of Lutheran Social Services to be set up in the state. Counselor Steve Ranheim, an American Lutheran and a professional psychiatric social worker with an M.S.W, sees clients there two and a half days a week.

The Rev. Richard Jespersen, director of the central office for the Lutheran Counseling Services in Colorado, said "Often people in need of help prefer to seek it through the Church. They may feel more comfortable with a therapist who is trained to be sensitive to spiritual needs, or a holistic approach." He explains that Ranheim will work closely with St. John's priests or others, as needed.

St. John's dean, the Very Rev. Donald S. McPhail, is delighted to add Lutheran Services to the Cathedral ministries. "Counseling service, with a sliding fee schedule and a distinct church basis, will serve the needs of many people" he noted. "It is a supplement to the great work going on at the Episcopal Pastoral Center and Central Denver Community Services."

The sponsoring Lutheran judicatories include the groups involved in the interim agreement and the Missouri Synod.

###



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/ Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

CUBAN CONSULTATION

FINDS SIGNS OF HOPE

DPS 84245

HAVANA (DPS, Dec. 6) — "The many difficulties have strengthened our faith, and our trust in God remains as firm as ever," said a lay leader during a Partners in Mission Consultation held here in early November. The external partners agreed, saying in their report, "We are awestruck by the faith, loyalty and conviction of the Cuban clergy and their families."

Some 30 church people, including nine from England, Canada, Mexico and the United States, wrestled with the ministry and mission of the Episcopal Church in today's Cuba.

"It is not easy to be a Christian in an officially atheistic society, but our call is to be here and to do the best we can," said another layperson.

In the last 25 years, the Cuban society has affected the life of the Church. "We have been isolated from the rest of the Anglican Communion, we have received very small outside assistance and we have seen the exodus of hundreds of Episcopalians," reports the Ven. Oden Marichal, Archdeacon of Matanzas province and newly appointed dean of Union Theological Seminary, an ecumenical institution sponsored by Presbyterians, Methodists and Episcopalians.

While before the Revolution the Episcopal Church had some 30 clergy, today it has 11, including Bishop Emilio Hernandez. This small group, assisted by layreaders, has continued to minister to the needs of the people.

The Episcopal Church work in Cuba began more than a century ago when an American priest, Edward Kinney, began to minister to foreigners who were not Roman Catholic and had no pastoral services. His work was later continued when Cuba was designated as a "missionary district" and a bishop appointed in 1905.

In 1966, for political reasons, the Episcopal Church in Cuba was granted autonomy from the Episcopal Church in the U.S. and placed under a metropolitan council formed by the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Archbishop of the Province of the West Indies and the president of Province IX. The council is responsible for the faith and order of the Cuban church, but never has acted in terms of planning

DPS 84245/2

and program. This aspect surfaced repeatedly, and most participants agreed that the present connection of the Church in Cuba with the rest of of the Anglican Communion needs revision and constant nurture.

Reasons for increased contact go beyond concern for Cuban brothers and sisters. The partners noted in their report how much they themselves had gained through their contact with the Cuban Church in new insights and understandings and a strengthening and renewing of their own faith and vision.

After long presentations and discussions of the work and ministry of the Church in Cuba a number of issues emerged. Bishop Frank Cervený of Florida, Cuba's companion diocese, confronted the group with the question: How do you witness to Christ in this society? Many answers were given which pointed to the fact that in an atheistic society, the strategy has to be different. The Cuban constitution allows for the freedom of worship but reaffirms materialism as the official doctrine of the state and asserts that to oppose one's belief to the revolution is punishable by law.

Because of this, just to attend church services is a powerful witness, and many people choose not to do that, fearing discrimination in work or housing. Attendance at church services is low, therefore. "I have many members of my parish who contribute, although they only come occasionally," said a young priest.

While the partners saw obvious reasons for concern, at the same time, they felt there was much about which to be hopeful. Among these were the dialogue between Church and State, the strength of ecumenical relationships, and the number of new vocations for the ordained ministry — including three women. In fact, current candidates, postulants and aspirants added together total eight persons — one less than the number of Episcopal priests now active in Cuba.

Other figures given to the consultation are: Baptized members 120,000; confirmed 15,500 and communicants 3,000. Even when these figures were challenged, some leaders of the clergy said that once a person is baptized they are a member of the Church regardless of the course of their life later on. Another priest confided in private. "Even if we do not have all the people, it is good to think that we do. Otherwise, we either leave the country or forget about the Church and join the Communist party."

ANGLICAN CENTRE

BROADENS BASE

DPS 84246

ROME (DPS, Dec. 6) — The Anglican Centre in Rome is seeking to strengthen relations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics by launching an association of Friends of the Centre.

The Centre was set up in 1966 after the Second Vatican Council and the historic meeting of Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI, when it was agreed to begin international discussions between the Communions. It is affiliated with the Anglican Consultative Council.

Friends will receive a twice-yearly newsletter, reports on the state of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations, and commentary and reflections from the Centre's director, the Rev. Canon Howard E. Root.

"The Centre is a kind of Anglican embassy to the Holy See, a listening and explaining post," said Sir Mark Heath, British Ambassador to the Holy See, who has agreed to serve as chairman of a Council of the the Friends. Patrick Gilbert, secretary of SPCK, is vice-chairman.

A place for clergy and laity from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Communions to meet and study, and the Centre seeks to promote informed dialogue between the Churches. It has a library of over 10,000 volumes, mainly on the life and work of the Anglican Church, which is reputed to be the only one of its size on the continent of Europe. Each year it runs a two-week seminar for Anglicans from all over the world which aims to enhance their understanding of the Roman Catholic Church through contact with its central secretaries and agencies.

Membership in the Friends is open both to individuals and institutions. Regular and ordinary members are asked to contribute \$15.00 per year. The Council also has agreed to establish categories of Life Member and Benefactor which call for a one-time contribution of \$250 or \$5,000 respectively.

In commending the initiative, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie said: "I believe that the Friends can be a powerful influence for strengthening still further the links between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches."

Contributions from the United States and Canada should be sent as follows: North American Friends of the Anglican Centre in Rome, 337 Main Street, Portland, CT 06486.

###

COCU CHURCHES

GET STUDY DOCUMENT

DPS 84247

BALTIMORE (DPS, Dec. 6) — On the last day of the Nov. 26-30 Consultation on Church Union (COCU) meeting here, 90 representatives from nine major U.S. Protestant denominations voted unanimous approval of a proposed step toward unity.

The 28,000-word theological statement, entitled "In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting: An Emerging Theological Consensus", will now be submitted to the respective denominational bodies for their discussion and approval. This is the first time since the Consultation's inception that member churches will be asked to formally approve a theological foundation for union, and, since procedures for acceptance within the denominations vary, it is expected to be at least 1988 before all will have had a chance to act.

Achievement of consensus on the essentials of faith, worship, order and witness while retaining aspects of individual traditions and heritage has been the goal of the group throughout its history. Founded in 1962 after the Rev. Eugene Carson Blake, a Presbyterian, proposed a major church union in a sermon preached in San Francisco's Grace Episcopal Cathedral at the invitation of the late Bishop James Pike, the Consultation on Church Union paved the way for the present 70-page statement with a series of discussions which over the years have led to preliminary theological agreements. The nine communions currently belonging to Consultation are: the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.

The Rev. Gerald F. Moede, general secretary of the Princeton-based Consultation, told the opening session of this, the 16th round of discussions, that the time has come for Christians to "cease being merchants of words and welcome each other into the larger household of faith" and added that they need to go beyond "polite forbearance, beyond a mere willingness to differ without recrimination, to the creation of good will and fellowship with those holding differing views."

DPS 84247/2

Two supporting documents approved here will go to the churches for study, reaction, and proposed revision. One describes a "covenanting" process that the churches are asked to enter as an interim, trust-building era to get ready for actual union. The second document is a draft of proposed liturgies for services on both national and regional levels that would inaugurate the covenanting era -- a time which is not expected to arrive for another 12 to 16 years.

The "Quest" statement is not intended, its backers say, to "be an amalgam of the views now held in the different member churches," but rather "to give the churches the confidence they need to move toward covenanting." To that end, "Quest" is intended for wide distribution and study by congregations within the participating denominations, and a study guide is available to assist congregations with this.

Included in "Quest" are chapters dealing with reasons for seeking unity of the Church, making unity visible, the nature of a united church -- which is seen as both similar to and different from the churches as they now exist, confessions of faith (the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds are recognized, as are confessions of faith developed by the individual churches, so long as not used as bases for division), worship, and ministry. Many details have been deliberately left unsettled to provide "room for the participating churches to grow together in unforeseen ways as they work out the implications of the covenant."

Based on the covenanting concept, the document introduced here details elements of the evolving plan of organization for movement toward a united church. These include: recognition by each participating church of the others' members and ordained ministries, establishment of regular eucharistic fellowship, engaging in mission and evangelism together, and formation of monitoring "councils of oversight."

In other action, the Consultation elected the Rev. George H. Pike, a Presbyterian, as its ninth president, and the Rt. Rev. Donald J. Parsons, Episcopal Bishop of Quincy, and Christian Methodist Episcopal Bishop Marshall Gilmore of Shreveport, La. as vice-presidents.

In addition to Parsons, Episcopal representatives to the Consultation are Bishops Robert Anderson, John M. Burt, and Edward W. Jones; the Revs. Richard A. Norris and William Petersen; Prof. Alice C. Cowan; Phebe Hoff; and Drs. Charles Lawrence and Cynthia Wedel.

###

